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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/16/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [CG](#) [IN](#)
SUBJECT: FOREIGN SECRETARY MENON SAYS KABILA LETTER
INSUFFICIENT TO KEEP TROOPS IN MONUC

REF: STATE 35855

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter Burleigh. Reasons: 1.4 (B and D)

[¶1.](#) (C) In an April 15 meeting with Indian Foreign Secretary Menon, Ambassador Burleigh urged that the GOI reconsider its intention to withdraw Indian forces from UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), pointing to recent letter from President Kabila as evidence that the Congolese government appreciated the role of Indian troops. Drawing from reftel points, the Ambassador stressed the critical importance of Indian forces in MONUC and the damage a withdrawal could have on the situation in the DRC.

[¶2.](#) (C) Menon said that the Kabila letter was not quite the "apology" the Indians were looking for in light of the GDRC's November 22, 2008 letter to the UN Secretary General. What India was looking for was a statement that would "wipe the slate clean." Menon said he would not dictate the contents of that statement, but that the implications of the November 2008 letter had still not been addressed. Menon said India did not want to have its military forces in places where they were not welcome. He charged that the November 2008 letter actually endangered Indian troops because they reflected a lack of support from the host government that could encourage attacks on peacekeepers. To date, peacekeeping had been popular with the Indian public, but if troops were harmed, there would inevitably be questions raised about why Indians were serving in a place where they were not wanted.

[¶3.](#) (C) Menon said that India was not interested at this point in a visit from the Congolese Foreign Minister to resolve the issue, because that could make the situation worse by raising questions in the public mind about problems with MONUC participation. He also complained that UN DPKO had not strongly defended the value of India's contribution when this issue was first raised. Menon sought to reassure the Ambassador that any Indian withdrawal would not be precipitous.

[¶4.](#) (C) Comment: The GOI seems determined to withdraw its forces from MONUC in the absence of a letter from the Congolese that specifically disavows their November 2008 letter.
BURLEIGH